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051033Z Apr 05

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DS-00
	EUR-00	VC-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	M-00	AC-00	NEA-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OES-00	OIC-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	PM-00
	GIWI-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1304  
INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USLO TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 000543

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/C, AF/SPG, D, DRL, INR/GGI, PRM,  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/04/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KAWC](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: RIFTS IN REBEL RANKS PLAY OUT IN CHAD

REF: A. NDJAMENA 405

- [1](#)B. NDJAMENA 441
- [1](#)C. KHARTOUM 297
- [1](#)D. ASMARA 228

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Over the past month, several important developments that could affect cohesion and direction of the Darfur rebel movements have played out in Chad. As previously reported, Chadian officials invited members of the Sudan Liberation Movement SLM to N'Djamena to hold organizational meetings. The Chadians provided guesthouses and President Deby's half-brother Daoussa managed the consultations among various SLM factions and with the Chadian Government. SLM is still planning a leadership meeting in Darfur in May to settle its structural problems, and if Chadian meddling succeeded, Abdelwahid Nour would be ousted as SLM's Chairman. The Justice and Equality Movement's (JEM) expulsion of field commander Mohammed Saleh has galvanized his determination to remove Dr. Khalil Ibrahim or to split off secular commanders disgruntled with the movement's ties to former Sudanese Minister Turabi from the group. Finally, rifts within the NMRD over GOC and GOS control and payments to its leadership and a GOS attack on the group have split the group wide open. Some of these developments could have a positive impact on the movements' ability to negotiate, if a consolidated leadership structures can emerge and the process is properly managed. In the short term, however, the GOS is gaining valuable ground while the movements' internal wars rage. End Summary.

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SLM: MINI VERSUS ABDELWAHID  
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[1](#)2. (C) The SLM consultations in N'Djamena wrapped up on March 25 and appear to have achieved a consensus that Dr. Sharif Harir and Bahar Arabi would join Mini Minawi in the leadership of SLM. (Refs A and B discuss Chadian motivations.) Abdelwahid will likely be "voted" out in the SLM's meeting in Darfur in May. The Chadians, according to some SLM members, would also prefer Mini to be removed, but in the end may have reached a deal that consolidates Zaghawa control over the movement. Daoussa Deby, the President's half-brother, coordinated the consultations. Chad allegedly is interested in bolstering the SLM organizationally as a counterweight to the GOS's support for Chadian rebels based in Sudan. Prior to his departure for France for medical care on March 22, President Idriss Deby held several meetings with various SLM military and political groups, including at least one meeting with field commanders and others with Adam Shogar, Sharif Harir, and Bahar Arabi. According to Adam Shogar, Deby told SLM that the Chadian Government shares many of SLM's interests, particularly bringing the crisis to an end. Shogar also said the President also told SLM that the GOS is manipulating negotiations to buy itself time and that it does not intend to respect the ceasefire. P/E officer was taken to greet SLM commanders Juma Haggar, Djidu, and

long-time contact Ramadan as well as several other field commanders in Sharif's room on March 21. P/E officer later learned that they were allegedly there to receive money in exchange for supporting Sharif.

13. (C) The fate of several SLM members in Chad is indicative of the internal haggling going on within the movement and Chadian complicity in the attempt to oust Abdelwahid. Reftels A and B report post's attempts to locate members of the SLM who were allegedly beaten and detained by their own members. On March 23 after two weeks of changed meetings, P/E officer was taken to see them. Sulieman Marajan, Dr. Saleh, and Mohammed Harin had finally been allowed to visit their colleagues at one rebel safehouse, but hinted they were about to be moved back to Sudan and killed. P/E officer used one minute alone with Marajan and Saleh to hear that they were being mistreated and feared for their lives. At a second, heavily guarded safehouse, P/E officer met Ahmed Kubur. He did not say anything but looked exhausted. P/E officer requested a meeting with Bahar Arabi, who was in N'Djamena to represent SLM's General Secretary Mini Minawi, for later that night to get assurances for their safety. Bahar said that Abdelwahid's removal from the head of SLM is imminent and there is no need to coerce anyone to do it. Bahar said that the meeting in Darfur is still being planned for May, but that he and Mini would like to travel to the United States before then. He requested assistance with

a U.S. visa to travel with Mini Minawi in the near future.  
(Note: Bahar is a Chadian passport holder. End Note.)

14. (C) Mini told P/E officer on March 29 that Abdelwahid is a "pathological liar" and had created the entire sequence as a hoax to make it look like his supporters were coerced into betraying him. However, Mini ordered Juma Hagggar not to kill anybody after hearing about our concerns for their safety. According to Mini, the members joined SLM of their own free will and could leave freely. (Comment: Mini may or may not know what it happening to the commanders. End Comment.) Nonetheless, Marajan and Saleh told intermediaries that they "escaped" from the other SLM members before they crossed the border into Tine, Sudan and have called from hiding in Tine, Chad to find a way back to their colleagues in N'Djamena. Two outside sources have indicated to P/E officer that Ahmed Kubur is still being detained in N'Djamena by Chadian authorities. General Mahamat Ali told P/E officer on March 31 that "those SLM being detained committed crimes in Chad", an indication that Chadian authorities are likely involved in the situation.

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JEM: OUSTED COMMANDER IS ON THE OFFENSIVE  
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15. (C) The "firing" of field commander Mohammed Saleh could prove to be a big mistake for JEM's leadership. Saleh disregarded Dr. Khalil Ibrahim's boycott of the February 16-17 meeting of the Joint Commission in N'Djamena. He was "ousted" a few days later, but was confident that he has enough backing within the rank-and-file of JEM to be unconcerned about any of Khalil's pronouncements. P/E officer was surprised to meet up with Saleh in Abeche on March 24. He had left N'Djamena earlier in the month and had been in Abeche re-supplying for his return to Darfur to mobilize other JEM commanders with secular leanings to remove Khalil and the Islamists from JEM's leadership.

16. (C) Saleh is realistic about the problems with funding that would then ensue, but feels very strongly that the majority of JEM needs to be liberated from Turabi's agenda. According to Saleh, JEM's current agenda remains the acquiring seats in the Islamic Government of Khartoum for Khalil's people through the Darfur peace process. Saleh claims that he and other commanders are tired of the leadership of JEM denying its links with Turabi. Saleh said that many JEM commanders are still upset that Khalil ordered them to assist with Turabi's coup attempt and that Turabi and those Darfurians who did participate were put in JEM's list of persons detained by the GOS for the prisoner exchange. This move, according to Saleh, means that it will be more difficult to obtain the release of JEM members captured who were fighting for Darfur, not Turabi.

17. (C) Saleh says he is "flexible" on the potential outcomes of his actions. He prefers removing Khalil outright. However, if this is not possible, he will look for ways to take the remaining JEM forces away from Khalil and join with other Darfurian rebels, preferably SLM and the disaffected NMRD members, who used to be part of JEM. Saleh has already begun laying the groundwork for his plan. While he was in N'Djamena in February and March, Saleh met with many NMRD members who had split from JEM. They told Saleh that they were fooled by promises of money and equipment and quickly realized the movement was a creature of the Sudanese Government. Saleh agreed to take back into his fold any of the NMRD members that want to leave.

18. (C) Interestingly, Chadian officials have told us that they believe Ahmed Lissan Tugod, JEM's General Coordinator, is ready to join Saleh if he is successful. Talgedin Niam, JEM's other Joint Commission representative in N'Djamena, is firmly ensconced in the Khalil camp and was put on the JC to keep an eye on Lissan. As previously reported, Lissan has tried to temper JEM's position on boycotting the Abuja talks until proceedings are underway against war criminals. (Ref B)

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NMRD: GOS ATTACK, NEW LEADERSHIP  
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19. (C) The NMRD leadership's ties to the GOS and GOC have long undermined its credibility with the international community and now are causing severe internal divisions. Norain reportedly has been replaced as NMRD's General Secretary by Osman Ali Chaibo, brother of Chad's National

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Security Agency Director. (Note: In ref B, information we received that Baradine Chaibo is NMRD's new leader is incorrect. End Note.) Norain is allegedly considered too weak to keep the movement together and to put down internal dissent. P/E officer met with Hasan Khamis, a former JEM commander and current member of NMRD, in Abeche on March 25. According to Khamis, the rank-and-file NMRD are upset over what they perceive to be Norain's and Djibrine's subservience to the GOS and GOC. Khamis claimed that Norain was not only in Abeche to visit the injured Djibrine, who was shot in the leg during the attack at Jebel Moon. Khamis explained that Norain was there to receive money and instructions from the Sudanese consulate in Abeche. (Comment: Djibrine was moved to Abeche for treatment and now is reportedly traveling to a third country for additional care. End Comment.)

110. (C) Khamis is in hot water with NMRD's leadership (i.e. with the Chadian and Sudanese security services) because he has vocalized the complaints of other former JEM members of NMRD that the movement's leadership does the bidding of the GOS. Khamis told P/E officer that he was placed under the watchful eye of another NMRD member and the Chadian and Sudanese security services in Abeche. He is not free to leave Abeche but is allowed to move around the town. He is looking for a way out of Abeche to rejoin JEM's Mohammed Saleh in the field and believes that other disaffected NMRD and JEM can reconstitute another group that may either take over JEM or join with SLM.

111. (C) During a meeting with P/E officer in Abeche on March 24, Norain described the GOS attack on NMRD's base at Jebel Moon. Approximately 600 GOS soldiers and jandjaweed surrounded and attacked the NMRD at Jebel Moon on March 16, according to NMRD's Norain Minawi. The GOS reportedly had intelligence that NMRD's chief of staff Djibrine Abdelkerim Bary was in Tine with 200 other NMRD followers, leaving Jebel Moon virtually undefended. GOS troops and jandjaweed staged for the attack approximately 25 kilometers from Jebel Moon and launched the assault at 5:00 a.m. The NMRD reports that the GOS used an Antonov during the attack, although it did not bomb the area.

112. (C) Djibrine was alerted in Tine and rushed back to Jebel Moon within a few hours. According to Norain, Jebel Moon's natural defenses helped NMRD repel the attack. Djibrine and his troops were able to push the GOS and jandjaweed some 50 kilometers out of the area. NMRD claims that 100 jandjaweed were killed and only four NMRD died. The GOS and jandjaweed burned all of the fields and huts in the area and destroyed all of NMRD's spare parts for their vehicles. Norain described other movements of men in Sudanese government uniforms on horseback and camels near Masteri and Kabkahir. He also reported that 30 villages located 60 kilometers south of El Geneina in a jandjaweed-controlled area were recently destroyed.

113. (C) Norain described his meeting with Chadian President Idriss Deby on March 22. According to Norain, Deby told him that the GOS is not respecting the ceasefire agreement it signed with NMRD in December 2004. Deby reportedly told Norain that as far as Chad is concerned, the NMRD is free from any obligation to honor the agreement. Deby told Norain that it is clear from Deby's meeting with Vice President Taha the previous week, that the GOS wants to control key areas in Darfur, such as Jebel Moon and Jebel Marra, prior to the next Abuja session.

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COMMENT  
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114. (C) Leadership changes in the rebel movements could result in a clearer focus and development of a cohesive political agenda if properly managed. In the case of JEM, an

outcome which strengthens the secular elements against the pro-Turabi, Islamic elements could help diminish Khalil's disruptive influence and make JEM a more effective negotiator at the table. It could also diffuse some of the GOC's dislike for JEM should the movement be able to de-link itself from the GOS's most powerful rival. The defection of JEM's remaining field commanders would clearly undercut Khalil's credibility. However, a new JEM would lack Khalil's powerful financial base. Settling SLM's leadership issues, however, is more difficult and has the potential for a dangerous rift within the group with the largest presence on the ground. If Abdelwahid is removed, he still has commanders who could cause serious problems on the ground for SLM. Moreover, a

resolution that overwhelmingly favors the Zaghawa members of the movement will inevitably alienate members of Fur, Dadjo, Massalit and other ethnic groups. The emergence of another SLM splinter group among the movements would also hamper attempts at negotiations. Finally, the NMRD's demise would have little or no impact on the situation unless its members join forces with another movement. We are still pursuing the issue of the detained SLM commanders with Chadian authorities and SLM officials in N'Djamena.

15. (U) Khartoum and Tripoli Minimize Considered.  
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